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ABSTRACT

In recent years some exceptionally optimistic writings by feminist scholars have addressed a shift away from the male manque model of femininity to one celebrating feminine growth. Archetypal myths have inculcated people's minds with the notion that domination and conquest serve to justify men's domination over the feminine. Narrative communicates myths that people live by, and imaginative works have power to motivate people. An essential source of this power is conflict, but this feature is now being challenged by feminists. Also being challenged are tradition myths of hierarchy and success/failure. To construct a "new woman," playwrights must know the old. Archaeological evidence shows ancient societies ruled by women, focused on affiliation and not dominance. Women are turning to ancient texts, goddess religions, and a return to Eros to redeem the divine in themselves to become whole women. Love and the erotic are linked to conflict in the works of many feminist writers. Toni Packer describes the process essential to the self-knowledge necessary for bringing about change and peace in the self, and excerpts from her writings demonstrate the influential aspects of images on the construction of the self. In short, simple attention and questioning are the necessary first steps to changing the way conflict is deployed and internalized. By changing the stories, change will be produced in the world. Images and conflict ultimately cannot be completely avoided, but fresh non-destructive ways of evoking and confronting both should be explored. (Thirty-four references and two notes are attached.) (HB)

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TELL ME A STORY I'LL NEVER FORGET
OR DECONSTRUCTING TRADITIONAL NARRATIVE PLOT/MYTHS
TO CHALLENGE THE ETHICS OF CONFLICT

DELIVERED TO THE CEA CONFERENCE, PITTSBURGH, MARCH 1992

BY PENELOPE PRENTICE

Ten years ago I bought a birthday card picturing a successful woman with short hair, a suit, tie, and a briefcase. It read: Congratulations, you've finally become the man your mother always wanted you to marry. The woman spoke to some unease I had with my own consciously erected male manque facade. But in the past two years some exceptionally optimistic writings, primarily by feminist, Jungian scholars and therapists, have frontally challenged and addressed a shift away from the male manque model of femininity, to one exploring and celebrating feminine growth and representing, I believe, a significant step toward reclaiming women's power, as I shall explain.

I witnessed that shift last spring in the distance women playwrights had come between the First International Women Playwright's Conference three years ago in Buffalo and the second in Toronto two years later. During the first, women bemoaned male chauvinism the resultant lack of venue--women have only 7% of the stage world-wide and half given to Agatha Christie. But during the second conference anger and complaint were displaced by the simple acknowledgement that, Yes we live in a dominator society, but that we must work in partnership with all people, and women, as keepers of the peace, must save the world, and we will.

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This paper began twenty years ago examining British playwright Harold Pinter's work which relentlessly dramatizes how dominator, hierarchical, relationships inevitably self-destruct from the private level to global spheres. At the core his work dramatizes the awful paradox, that the very attempt to survive, when driven by a desire to dominate others, may destroy both the self and others. His work demonstrates how justice without love is not justice, that it is inadequate merely to hold the right attitudes and intentions, but it is also necessary to act fairly for the welfare of all.

If conflict is the essence of drama, much fiction, film, and TV, and if, as some theorists suggest, our current use of conflict promotes continued conflict, perhaps even chronic warfare, how can the responsible playwright or professor endorse conflict and promote concord necessary for continued human survival and growth on this planet?

Riane Eisler, in "Social Transformation and the Feminine: From Domination to Partnership:" (contained in Connie Zweig's collection of essays, To Be a Woman: The Birth of the Conscious Feminine), says "Ours is a species that quite literally lives by stories and images, by the myths--be they religious or secular--that tell us what is "sacred," "natural," and "true." And for a long time our conscious minds have been fettered by stories and images that serve to maintain a dominator system." She cites "the all too familiar archetype of the hero as killer (all the way from Odysseus to Rambo) inculcates the minds of both men and women with the notion that domination and conquest--whether of women, other men, other nations, or

nature--.... The powerful archetype of woman as evil seductress (from Circe in the Odyssey to Glen Close's role in Fatal Attraction) serves to further justify men's domination over women and the Feminine." (35) Fairy tales where Sleeping Beauty passively awaits Prince Charming to wake her "conditions both little girls and little boys to associate passivity and powerlessness with women..., [and that] there is no such thing as a "Conscious Feminine--that without a man to wake her, a woman has no consciousness at all." (35)

I believe the development of human history is written in the development of human consciousness.

The writer, filmmaker, storyteller, teacher all have the great power to still the chaotic torrent of sound in our heads, and introduce for the moment a single voice that expresses a vision that can change our myths and change us.

TELL ME A STORY

"Tell me a Story I'll Never Forget," is an assignment from the poet Tess Gallagher: ask someone to tell you a story you'll never forget. Write it up. It works. We all love good stories that enthrall. That bond that forms between listener and teller can be hypnotic, not only to hold surface interest, but more important, on subtextual levels to change us: Joan Borysenko, head of the mind body clinic at Harvard, is one of many clinicians to endorse narrative's power of suggestion to move clients to new action.

Since narrative communicates myths we live by, we all carry the responsibility to understand the values and vision communi-

cated in our stories, whose end, I believe is to inspire that special generosity called courage to act with love and justice.

But how?

The power of imaginative work to move our heads through our hearts a long distance in a short space comes from several sources, but two chiefly: images and conflict.

That indelible power of images, long recognized in Zen koans, Christian parables, and Sufi stories, can be defined by telling one: once a learned professor, fearing he'd grown old without growing wise, sought out a Zen monk who invited him to tea. The professor watched the monk pour the tea slowly, letting the steam rise to the brim till the tea filled the cup as the monk continued pouring tea splashing to the floor. The professor shouted, "What are you doing?" The monk smiled, "Your mind is like this tea cup. It is so full there is no room for anything new."

The German art critic Anton Ehrenzweig claims that the function of art is to delight and to disturb. I believe it is through conflict, through what disturbs, that our received attitudes are challenged and we are summoned to develop and to change. What are the stories we in the West never forget?

The essence of drama and much good fiction is conflict. The skillful writer raises conflict of ordinary stakes to life and death proportions to evoke that spray of adrenalin that writes messages in the reader's blood.

But recent feminist writers challenge that subtextual message conveyed through that use of conflict as primitive, dangerous, even unethical

DECONSTRUCTING TRADITIONAL PLOT STRUCTURE NARRATIVE

In her book Dreaming the Dark the author Starhawk argues against what I call the testosterone ethic of dominance, which governs our Western plot structures.

She identifies four destructive narrative plot structures based on dichotomous, hierarchical thinking: 1) Good guys vs bad, us vs them, which she says creates split worlds, one good, idealized, the other bad, devalued. 2) Apocalypse, the revolution, where death takes precedence over the world; a state makes murder illegal but...makes war promoting "a crisis mentality that prevents planning and working for long term change." (19-20) 3) Great man receives truth to give to chosen few. "Call him Moses, Jesus, Freud, Buddha, or Marx," she says, places truth outside, makes him the source of authority, invaliding other knowledge unless it is based upon, or does homage to, the works of the Great Man (Dreaming the Dark, 22)."

"The women's movement early saw through the story...., perhaps because Great Men are never women.... And women must be devalued in order for the Great Man to be so elevated (22)." 4) Making it/the fall, or the saved/the damned, the American Dream is a story about success and failure, stepping on others, fixing responsibility on individual inadequacy. Both are the same story in reverse: "Both reinforce...a power structure in which some people have value and others don't (22-23)," and both can appear at once: A Star is Born.

These four narrative myths, stories of estrangement, keep us busy trying to make it, to push our way into the inner circles of

the elect, looking for our personal salvation instead of challenging the consciousness that devalues what we already are. Ultimately such use of conflict destroys relationship at all levels.

The "news" is not new. Aristotle knew that we could only have friendship or concord in relationships between equals in virtue. But is it possible to replace the dominant/hierarchical, binary structures of society with ones based on immanence, affiliation, networking with all people to empower the self and others? (4) Maybe not if women and men view and respond to conflict differently.

Deborah Tannen, in You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation, argues that where men see the world in hierarchical structures, seek contest and conflict, expressing themselves in report, women seek concord and connection, expressed in rapport. If what Tannen says is true we might ask two questions:
1) Are the opposing views and actions of men and women innate?
2) Can we tell stories we never forget without conflict?

1) Is the dichotomy between the sexes Tannen and others report endogenous, hard wired in, say, to testosterone levels? Little girls, she says, still prefer to nurture, play with dolls, select games that require community, everyone taking turns; while women do most of the listening and assenting, boys and men prefer contest, and sports, and do most of the talking and challenging. In professional meetings women speak on an average from three to ten seconds, men, from ten to twenty. While some women are seemingly attacked by their hormones, at one extreme, say with PMS, at the other extreme, some men apparently attack with

theirs; most violent crime is committed by men between the ages of fourteen and twenty-eight, (Silberman, 31-35), before testosterone levels subside.

Is what Tannen describes only a difference in culture, status, or is it both: partially innate, partially learned? How Is the situation changing? Even when women in the world learn to speak more like men they are both perceived differently by men and by women, and caught in a double devaluation: if they fail to adopt male speech patterns their communication may be ignored, and if they do, they may be labeled and dismissed as arrogant and aggressive. Interestingly, in hierarchical societies women who achieve power, say CEO status in England or Japan, are addressed directly, and accorded more respect, than in egalitarian societies like our own, where remarks in a meeting will be directed to any males present rather than to her, even if she is the CEO.

2) The second question is equally important: Can we have unforgettable stories without conflict? Conflict, consigned by some feminists to a male worldview, is missing from the work of many of the world's women playwrights, but seems to me, fundamental to engage the heart to move the head.

NEW WOMEN

If we want a new woman (and a new man), or a new heroine, we shall have to know the old. Jean Baker Miller in her book Toward a New Psychology of Women, written over a decade ago, suggests that women's great strength is in nurturing and preserving concord, virtues little valued because the dominant society devalues them. But, Miller argues, in order to gain power to nurture and

to keep the peace in a world threatening itself with destruction women cannot eschew conflict, but must not only confront conflict but initiate it. To do so we must acknowledge the nature and source of conflict from within and without.

Pinter's work addresses both sources. His newest work, a nine page sketch "New World Order," the title ironically lifted from one of President Bush's speeches, offers a stark portrayal of the ultimate form of dominance, torture which Amnesty International reports is routinely practiced by over eighty countries. The play offers a startling insight into the sources of our deepest conflicts that trigger the impulse to violence, illustrating Michael Wood's point in Legacy, his six part television journey Legacy on the origins of civilizations: our civilization is split between barbarism and idealism. In "New World Order" two men Des and Lionel discuss the fate of a seated, blindfolded victim:

> DES: Do you want to know something about this man?
>
> LIONEL: What?
>
> DES: He hasn't got any idea at all of what we're going to do to him. (1)

Lionel adds: "Or his wife." In the end, Lionel sobs, and when Des asks why, Lionel says:

> I love it. I love it. I love it. (8)
>
> He explains:
>
> I feel so pure.

Des replies:

> Well, you're right. Your right to feel pure. You know why?

Because you're keeping the world clean for democracy. (9)

These men's identities have become cathected, attached to the point of identification, to an abstract ideal, Democracy, which they perceive as larger than themselves, and thus capable of enlarging their own beings. A flimsy, insecure inner self in Pinter's work requires self-transcendence to gain meaning, and the bolstering of a hierarchal position to preserve identity, because outer position is taken to be synonymous with identity--who one is.

We are engaged in a life-and-death struggle to save the planet, but I believe, confronting conflict in literature is ultimately an expression of trust. Conflict in stories does not merely test the virtue of the central character to show what she is made of, but ultimately her confrontation with conflict conveys a message of trust by showing that whether she succeeds or fails, (perhaps especially if she fails) she had choices, and had she chosen and acted differently she might have succeed, changed herself and others.

But how?

As a volunteer counselor how essential it is for a client to confront conflict to grow and to change. But long before Freud the philosopher Immanuel Kant proposed we have three choices in life: a choice of attitude, intention, and action. In psychology it is commonly accepted that if you change any two the third is likely to change, and remains one reason many disparate therapies work. Recently Brief Therapy grew out of the recognition that after years in analysis clients often made enormous changes in attitude and intention, without being able to alter action, but

recognized that change must include all three, the whole person, if it is to be permanent.

Borrowing from chaos theory Brief Therapy, with its focus on action, nevertheless operates on the assumption that positive change in action in any part of a system is likely to produce a positive change on the system as a whole. The concept, termed the Butterfly Effect, described in Chaos by James Gleick, suggests that butterfly that flaps its wings in Brazil can cause a tornado in New Orleans. That aspect of Chaos theory is integral with feminist theory. The introduction to the cookbook The New Laurel's Kitchen notes that within only two years in the last century slavery was abolished globally, and holds out hope that the nuturant values may similarly displace the material values of the "hurry sickness" of our own age by beginning with individuals who practice them.

The questions raised here are especially pressing for me since my students are primarily women--some of whom are demanding a new story. Who still subscribes to the old story (from Christina Feldman, who, in Woman Awake: A Celebration of Women's Wisdom, quotes) Simon de Beauvoir suggests, "Women accept the submissive role to avoid the strain involved in undertaking an authentic existence." (39) How can we teach effective communication, a proper appreciation of depth structures of narratives we live by without understanding our uses of conflict? But to understand where we must go we must understand where we have been.

WHERE HAVE WE BEEN AND WHERE ARE WE GOING

A BRIEF SURVEY OF RECENT COMMENTARY

Earlier I spoke of women as reclaiming power. Archaeological evidence cited by Raine Eisler in her book The Chalice & The Blade: Our History, Our Future. traces a 32,000 year history when women ruled, not in a dominator culture but a partnership. The evidence, scattered across Europe, to Asia is found in the remains of large, impressive communities without walls and without weapons; in the discovery of a great many very similar goddesses, referred to by patriarchy as fertility cult figures, in women's larger funerary relics, and in the size and placement of their beds, always placed in the same direction and bigger than the men's. Eisler finds hope in these recent archaeological discoveries to suggest the possibility of replacing a dominator society with one of affiliation. Her theory allows women to view themselves not as gaining but reclaiming power. She challenges "the widespread assumption that however bloody things have been since the days of the Sumerians and Assyrians this was just the unfortunate prerequisite for technological and cultural advance." She counters with one of "the best-kept historical secrets--that practically all the material and social technologies fundamental to civilization were developed before the imposition of a dominator society." (66)

She adds, "But of all the progressive ideologies, only feminism avoids the internal inconsistency by applying principles such as equality and freedom to all humanity--not just the male half." She adds, "And only feminism makes the explicit connection between the male violence of rape and wife beating and the male

violence of war." (169)

She defines feminism as "a discipline of thought and action that aims to enhance mutuality and trust among all people; to reveal the meanings of gender differences, especially as these might interfere with reciprocity and trust among people; and to oppose all models and methods of dminance-submission for relationships among people. (160)

Eisler concludes: "The aim of Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. is to transform rather than suppress conflict, and requires a reexamination of the way we define power." Like Jean Baker Miller Eisler distinguish between "power for oneself and power over others," who were "generally seen as dangerous. You had to control them or they would control you. But in the realm of human development, she finds this invalid: the greater the development of each individual the more able, more effective, and less needy of limiting or restricting others she or he will be." (Eisler 193)

What is the result? Eisler says: "Women are increasingly bringing power as affiliation with them as they move into the 'men's' world from their 'women's place. It is a 'win-win' rather than a 'win-lose" view of power." (193)

Where do we go from here?

Linda Schierse Leonard, in "Redeeming the Father and Finding the Feminine Spirit," asks, "Where are the myths and stories of feminine quests and courage?" (126) Polly Young-Eisendrath, in "Rethinking Feminism, the Animus and the Feminine," says, "What we painfully lack as a patriarchal culture are accounts of complete and strong women." (161) And worse, Eisler says: "What

is still lacking is the 'critical mass' of new images and myths that is required for their actualization by a sufficient number of people." (188) (about 35%)

Recently women have sought ancient texts and returned to goddess religions to redeem the divine in themselves and others for the development of the strong and whole women. Merlin Stone's When God Was a Woman traces the deliberate destruction of goddess religions with the onslaught of dominator societies and patriarchy. Elaine Pagels, in The Gnostic Gospels examines Mary Magdalene's place beside Christ as first among his disciples, as an a beautiful and erotically charged woman.

Recent scholars addressing what is fundamental among all humans, have addressed a need to return Eros to our ethic to reconnect the self with the whole. Nancy Qualls-Corbet calls for reinstating the erotic through the eternal feminine in forms which have appeared in many guises from goddesses Ishtar, Inana, and Isis, Venus to Athena, from the Black Madonna to Mary Magdalene. Qualls-Corbett in her 1988 study The Sacred Prostitute: Eternal Aspect of the Feminine. (Toronto: Inner City Books, 1988) says "Like the sacred prostitute, she mediated between the world of the divine and the world of humans." (150). Quoting Jung she adds, "most of what men say about feminine eroticism, and particularly about the emotional life of women, is derived from their own anima projections and distorted accordingly." (92; "Marriage as a Psychological Relationship," the Development of Personality. CW 17, par 338)

Whether or not we subscribe to notions of divinity I believe

we acknowledge the importance of love beyond its current practice, and appreciate its implicit connection to justice. As Qualls-Corbett concludes: "The dominant images in the Western world are those of power, wealth and technical knowledge--these are the 'gods' we currently honor. We no longer worship the goddess of love; consequently we have no container for sexual ecstasy, the numinous state where the inner core of the individual is awakened and revealed to self and other. Paper hearts and baby cupids hardly suffice; they are symbols of a sentimental romanticism which merely fulfills ego desires." (144) What Qualls-Corbett calls for is that wisdom of wholeness that can combine love and justice. In her final chapter, "The Restoration of the Soul," she quotes from Solomon: "For wisdom is a loving heart."

In a dichotomous society such as ours sexuality is relegated to the dark side, the unspeakable, however glaringly it shouts in advertising and the media. Perhaps as Jung proposes those who ignore the dark side, the unconscious, the shadow, risk being controlled by it. Physically in the deepest recesses of the most primitive portion of the human brain, in the amygdala, the erotic is linked to our impulse to violence which may be why it becomes essential to bring into conscious awareness that which we have hidden in the subconscious, not only what actuates individual action but the myths we live by.

Love and the erotic are linked to conflict in the works many feminist writers. Eisler says: "This theme of interconnectedness--which Jean Baker Miller calls affiliation..., Jesus, Gandhi, and other spiritual leaders have simply called love--is

today also a theme of the developing "new science"--of which "chaos" theory and feminist scholarship are integral parts--and is for the first time in history focusing more on relationships than of hierarchies." (191)

While the intentions seem good what of the actions?

Multiculturalism, a buzz word in education bandied about by the PC, politically correct, may be one direction toward dissolving hierarchies, but carries with it both danger and an opportunity. The danger is that as we brush up against others who are different we will reflexively defend whatever it is we identify with, and dismiss the other as "different," where "difference" carries a condemnatory devalued meaning. The opportunity for us is to recognize this instead as a chance for further growth for ourself and others. But how?

By understanding, suggests Tich Nhat Hanh, the Vietnamese Buddhist monk attending the Paris Peace Talks and instrumental in shaping the philosophy of Martin Luther King; in his 1991 book Peace is Every Step: The Path of Mindfulness in Everyday Life, he believes that peace in the world begins with peace in the self. He says, "The absence of clear understanding is the basis for every knot." (64-65) every obstacle.

But who or what is the self, and the source of both peace and destructive conflict?

Toni Packer, the first American women Zen master who left to establish a post-Zen approach to peace at the Springwater Center near Rochester, in her 1991 book The Work of This Moment, takes us through the process essential to that self-knowledge necessary

to bring about change and peace in the self and others.

In her chapter "Freedom From Images" Toni Packer says:

"It is a fact that one is a woman or a man. Also that one has an image of oneself as a 'woman' or a 'man.' Not just one image, but a whole host of images.... That one is an 'American' is an image.... [T]o think of oneself as an American, a Buddhist, and a woman is to be tied up with images, emotions and feelings of separateness." (47)

"The work of questioning deeply into the human mind is...not doing what we normally do and have been doing for hundreds of years: rushing to solve problems in a more or less violent way. This work is to <u>understand</u> a problem, not just superficially, or even deeply, but totally. It is to understand so completely that the problem may be resolved through this understanding and not through any 'solution' at all. (48)

"When the Olympic games are shown on television, for example, there may be a strong appeal to the 'American' image. When an American stands on the top step to receive the gold medal, with the national anthem being played..., does one's patriotic heart feel a boost? A boost to what? A boost to an image!" She suggests we may not mind seeing others win "every once in awhile, because one is also identified with the image of 'brotherhood.' As far as one's religious affiliation is concerned, is one identified with it, attached to it, so that one's self-image is invested in...the religious tradition or the center that one belongs to...? When someone criticizes one's religion, does one feel defensive immediately, personally attacked and hurt? Or if someone praises one's group or center, is one's vanity

flattered...? [O]ne's identity--'this is me." (49)

"And as a woman, what kind of images does one nurture, maybe quite unawares? Many people say to me that women have such a negative image of themselves, that one has to work on this bad image, improve it, empower it, which means substituting a good image for a bad image. But why does one need <u>any</u> image...?

"Watch it for yourself. You will discover amazing things that go on in this mind and therefore throughout this body. Anything that goes on it this mind, a single thought, is totally connected with the whole organism--electrically, neurochemically. One pleasurable thought gives a gush of good feeling. Then one wants to keep that feeling which is another thought: 'How can I keep that?' and when it stops: 'What have I done to lose it? How can I get it back?'" (49)

"The self image is easy to confuse with the self."

It is easy, she says to see how in the Middle East it is "possible in the place where three of the greatest religions were born, all of them preaching peace, that people kill each other" (51)

"What are you going to do about it?" she asks.

"It is a simple fact that this work can only start with oneself. When images dominate the mind, motivating our actions and creating goals of what we want to be or become, confusion reigns. How can we resolve confusion in the world if we are confused ourselves." (51)

She examines the "danger of being somebody," and the "fundamental anxiety of being nobody" (51) and asks, "Is it possible

to see and be free of images from moment to moment, really being no one and therefore completely open and related to everyone and everything, with a lovingness?

"One may deceive oneself about being a loving kind of person, being very compassionate. Is it just an image?" She asks can we listen, see, respond openly? She answers:

"It is up to each one of us. No one can do it for us.

"Listen!" (52)

RECONSTRUCTING THE STORY: REPLACING EITHER/OR FALLACIES WITH BOTH/AND THINKING

In summary we can see that simple attention and questioning are the necessary first steps to bring about any change in the way we deploy and internalize conflict. Images and conflict can be used to promote conflict, or to resolve it. I believe if we change our stories we will produce change in the world. But I do not believe that such change can occur without action in that larger world. I'd like to offer a guarded optimism, one that requires vigilance and courage to bring about consciousness and change to promote concord and justice that benefits all.

Very recently the male manque model of femininity, feminism itself as well as the theory that women once ruled in partnership societies has come under attack. Camille Pagalia, whose dismissal of recent literary theory has barred her from the approval of mainstream academic scholarship and obscured her sometimes brilliant insights, dismissed any hope of feminism's equality past or present in a few sweeping statements which regard man as stronger and scholarship about the as unsupported by a single shred of

evidence. Because her attack is likely to be in the forefront of similar attacks to undermine feminism's hopes of a universal equality for all people, raising doubts in many of our minds, I would like to submit that we do not yet know what women can do that there is no shred of evidence in academics that women are other than equals of men. I am reminded by my work on the first international women playwright's conference of how recent is women's universal entry into the performance arts: it is cotemperaneouos with the pill, universal birth control which for the first time permitted women world wide the opportunity to control procreation, and to travel as those in performing arts must, to be away form home for greatly extended periods of time.

In life and in art women and men may be seeing and telling a different story. But it may be possible to look for a solution to that apparent dilemma by suggesting, as many analysts from Jung through contemporary researchers do, that growth and development of the individual may come from developing the shadow side, the undeveloped side, by remaining flexible and seeking solutions that combine the best in both. Stewart Brand in The Media Lab: Inventing the Future at MIT repeatedly notes that the seeming "genius" solutions at MIT's media lab are generated by what he calls both/and thinking, which replaces an either/or quest for solutions.

We cannot dispense with images and may not wish to toss out conflict, and but rather find fresh non-destructive ways of evoking and confronting both in our stories while at the same time we seek ways to dramatize, appreciate and promote concord as a central value, indeed a primary virtue, in a troubled world.

If we are going to continue to tell stories we'll never forget then almost certainly we'll have to incorporate conflict, but we may have to reexamine the nature and source of that conflict, and the hierarchical, dichotomous messages we are conveying if we are going to contribute to creating order in a new world and another century.

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NOTES

[1]"As Miller writes, focusing her research on actualization rather than defense, the question is not how to eliminate conflict, which is impossible. As individuals with different needs and desires and interests come into contact, conflict is inevitable. The question directly bearing on whether we can transform our world from strife to peaceful coexistence is how to make conflict productive rather than destructive.

"As a result of what she terms productive conflict, Miller shows how individuals , organizations, and nations can grow and change. Approaching each other with different interests and goals, each party to the conflict is forced to reexamine its own goals and actions as well as those of the other party. The result for both sides is productive change rather than nonproductive rigidity. Destructive conflict, by contrast, is the equation of conflict with the violence required to maintain domination hierarchies.

"Under the prevailing system, Miller points out, 'Conflict is made to look as if it always appears in the image of extremity, whereas, in fact, it is actually the lack of recognition of the need for conflict and provision of appropriate forms for it that leads to danger. This ultimate destructive form is frightening, but it is also not conflict It is almost the reverse; it is the end result of the attempt to avoid and suppress conflict'." (Miller 130; Eisler 191-2)

[2]Cf's Roman and our times, break down of one of the most powerful dominator societies of all time: "Both are periods of what "chaos' theorists call states of increasing systems disequilibrium, times when unprecedented and unpredictable systems changes can come about." Quoting Ilya Prigogine "Initially small 'fluctuations" can lead to systems transformation." (Ilya Prigogine and Isabel Stengers. Order out of Chaos (New York: Bantam Books, 1984) Chapters 5,6. (129)